

Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program

Background and Purpose

The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program (MTESP) represents a collaborative project between governmental agencies, the turfgrass industry, Michigan State University and environmental advocacy groups. It is designed to make fundamental advances toward environmental protection on golf courses. The program was developed at Michigan State University with assistance from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Golf Association of Michigan, Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and the Michigan Golf Course Owners Association. The Michigan Department of Agriculture, Groundwater Stewardship Program, has provided base funding for the program over the past eight years. Additional support has been provided by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and the Department of Environmental Quality.



Doug Bouwer, owner, and Steve Tedhams, superintendent, of Watermark Country Club receive their certification plaque from the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program.

There are approximately 860 golf courses in Michigan. The state ranks among the national leaders in total number of golf courses and number of golf courses per capita. Michigan's golf industry recognizes the importance of sound environmental practices and considers a proactive approach to environmental issues as a key element to the future of the industry.

Mission

The mission of the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program is:

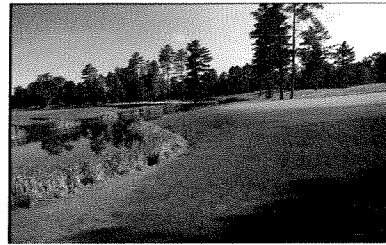


- to advance the environmental stewardship of Michigan's golf industry by maximizing the protection of natural resources;
- to engage the golf industry, regulatory agencies, Michigan State University, and environmental groups in productive communication;
- to clearly identify environmental laws and regulations and advance compliance;
- to enhance wildlife habitat, indigenous vegetation, and protect water resources with buffer zones;
- to recognize, promote, and award environmental stewardship achievements.

Program Participation

To participate in the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program, individuals from the course attend a Stewardship Workshop. At the workshop, participants begin an assessment process to evaluate the natural resources and identify the potential for pollution to occur on the property. A review of environmental laws and regulations that apply to golf courses is provided along with discussion on ways to accomplish compliance and increase environmental protection. The stewardship program addresses the following areas:

- Surface Water, Groundwater & Well Protection
- Pesticide/Fertilizer Application & Storage
- Pesticide Mix/Load Systems
- Fuel Storage Systems
- Equipment Wash Systems
- Emergency Response Plans
- Maintenance Buildings, Equipment & Supplies



After the workshop the assessment materials are completed for the property. A site visit is conducted next where a representative of the Stewardship Program and the superintendent review the materials and establish a three-year environmental action plan. Courses that complete the plan and achieve specific environmental protection and compliance tasks are recognized as certified in the program.

Participant Fees

Golf courses pay an annual fee of \$200.00. Additionally, a \$350.00 fee is charged when the property receives a site visit. A site visit is required every three years to remain active in the program.

Program Progress

The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program was launched in June 1998 and now has 226 golf courses participating in the program. One hundred and twenty three courses have completed a site visit and 59 courses are certified in the program. Program members have documented significant improvement toward risk reduction, increased compliance, pollution prevention and natural resource protection.

The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program has received local, national and international recognition. It was selected for the 2001 President's Environmental Leadership Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. This was a great honor for program members and supporting organizations.

For More Information on the MTESP

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